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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KACT](#) [START](#) [JCIC](#) [US](#) [RS](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: U.S.-RUSSIA TALKS IN ROME ON START FOLLOW-ON
AGREEMENT

REF: A. STATE 41125
[B](#). 08 STATE 114461
[C](#). 08 STATE 117164

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Elizabeth L. Dibble for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (S) During the initial discussions of the START follow-on agreement, the heads of delegation (Assistant Secretary for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Rose Gottemoeller and Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov) agreed to a tentative work program for developing the major elements of the agreement for presentation to Presidents Obama and Medvedev in July. A/S Gottemoeller presented some initial U.S. thoughts on substantive elements the U.S. believed should be contained in a START follow-on agreement, and on how verification measures drawn from START, when combined with experience gained during implementation of START, could be modified to construct an effective verification regime for the START follow-on agreement. Antonov stated that the Russian position on START follow-on was already well known and that key issues for Russia included discussion in the negotiations of the linkage between strategic offensive and defensive forces, and the inclusion in the agreement of strategic systems armed with conventional warheads. A/S Gottemoeller noted that the Presidents' London statement included agreement that the sides would discuss missile defense cooperation, but stated that the current talks should focus "like a laser" on negotiating a treaty on offensive reductions. Antonov expressed concern that the other three START parties (Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan) all have stated they wanted to be part of the START follow-on agreement. He and A/S Gottemoeller agreed that the United States and Russia should develop a joint approach to make it clear to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine that we are firm in our intent that the START follow-on agreement be bilateral, but are willing to assure them that their status regarding security assurances remains unchanged. End summary.

July Report to Presidents

[1](#)2. (S) Assistant Secretary for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Rose Gottemoeller led the U.S. delegation for talks on a START follow-on agreement in Rome on April 24, [1](#)2009. Ambassador Anatoly Antonov led the Russian delegation. The three-hour session was held in the U.S. Embassy and was followed by a brief press conference. Full delegation lists are provided in paragraph 16.

13. (S) A/S Gottemoeller began the meeting by noting that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the United States and the Russian Federation would meet the mandate given by Presidents Obama and Medvedev to provide a progress report in July in Moscow on their progress in negotiating a follow-on START agreement. She suggested incorporating elements of this report into a document that could be signed by the two presidents at the summit. As a possible template for the structure of this document, she passed Antonov a copy of the text of the June 17, 1992, Washington Summit Joint Understanding signed by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin.

14. (S) Antonov replied that the Russian Federation would consider the 1992 document, but would be open to a variety of possible formats. He added that substance would be more important than the format and stressed the need to agree on a common approach. Antonov commented that the 1992 document took more than six months of negotiations in Geneva to reach agreement, and noted that much less time exists prior to the July summit.

Schedule for START Follow-On Talks

15. (S) After discussion on a variety of possible dates and venues for further talks, a tentative schedule was agreed upon. On May 6, A/S Gottemoeller and Antonov would meet in Washington to continue with the preparatory talks for opening formal negotiations. (Begin Comment: Antonov also proposed the possibility of additional discussions while he and A/S

Gottemoeller were in New York for the NPT PrepCom that week. End Comment.) On May 18-20, the Delegations would meet in Moscow to begin a detailed discussion of the major elements each side proposed for the START follow-on agreement. On June 1-3, the Delegations would meet in Geneva. Antonov said that Russia proposed Geneva (which the U.S. said it would consider) because all Russian arms control experts would be in Geneva for the JCIC talks, preventing the possibility of holding START follow-on negotiations elsewhere. Antonov signaled a strong preference not to hold a round in early June in Moscow. Beginning on June 15, the Delegations would meet in Geneva to conclude framework discussions and prepare the final version of the progress report to Presidents. A/S Gottemoeller stated the U.S. would be prepared to continue this session as long as necessary to conclude the report to be presented at the July summit.

Substantive Elements

16. (S) Drawing upon guidance contained (Ref A), A/S Gottemoeller presented some initial U.S. thoughts on the possible form of the START follow-on framework within the progress reports to the Presidents and the substantive elements the U.S. believed should be contained in a START follow-on agreement. She also outline U.S. views (Ref A) on how verification measures drawn from START and modified for the specific provisions of the follow-on agreement could be combined with experience gained during implementation of START, to construct an effective verification regime for the START follow-on agreement. She passed the Russian side separate non-papers (points contained in Ref A) on the substantive elements and effective verification measures.

17. (S) Antonov responded by noting that the U.S. had an advantage in the START follow-on talks because the U.S. "already knew the Russian position," which had been presented, for example, in the Aide-Memoire (Begin Comment: No Reporting Cable. End Comment) provided by Russia on December 15, 2008, in response to a draft treaty the United States had provided to Russia in October 2008 (Refs B and C). Referring to the U.S. proposal made in A/S Gottemoeller's remarks that the new treaty count "operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads," Antonov

commented that no common U.S./Russian understanding existed on the definition of that term, and that one needed to be developed and agreed upon by both sides. He noted, however, that the U.S. position outlined by A/S Gottemoeller contained "new and nuanced" changes from previous U.S. proposals.

18. (S) Antonov stressed that the Russian goal in these talks was not simply to reduce nuclear armaments for their own sake, but Russia must also take into account its own important security interests in negotiating the treaty. In addition, Russia was interested in protecting strategic stability in any new treaty. During the course of the discussions, Antonov returned several times to the assertion that Russia's security interests in START follow-on talks required a linkage between limits on strategic offensive and strategic defensive capabilities. Antonov's complaints on U.S. missile defense activities focused on the so-called "third site" deployments in Poland and the Czech Republic, and the prospects for fourth and fifth sites in Europe. He noted that if the talks did not address this linkage, it would be "extremely difficult to find a common basis for a START follow-on treaty." Antonov noted that the Russian Federation supported effective verification measures but that it would need explanations from the United States on which START Verification provisions it wanted to retain and delete, and the reasoning behind the decisions.

19. (S) A/S Gottemoeller noted that the U.S. would not link missile defense to the START follow-on talks and suggested instead that discussions of missile defense cooperation should be carried out in a separate high-level series of bilateral consultations. She stressed that the U.S. believes that both sides should maintain a "laser-light" focus during the START follow-on talks on limiting strategic offensive arms. Antonov persisted in stating that there must be a link to strategic defense measures in the START follow-on talks. Antonov responded that the United States and Russia had discussed possible missile defense cooperation at a number of meetings over the last several years and that during those meetings Russia had made it very clear that it would never support U.S. missile defense programs that would undercut

Russian security, even if cooperation were offered by the United States for those programs. Lt. Gen. Buzhinskiy noted that all MOD assessments of the adequacy of future Russian strategic nuclear forces must take into account prospective U.S. missile defense capabilities.

110. (S) A/S Gottemoeller pressed Antonov on whether any elements of the Russian position had changed since the December 15, 2008 Aide-Memoire. Antonov repeated that the Russian position was well known to the United States. Look asked that the Russian side prepare a paper identifying the basic elements of the Russian position for the meetings in May. Antonov said he would look into doing so.

111. (S) Antonov asked whether the United States had decided what numerical limits should be imposed by the START follow-on agreement. Warner, noting Antonov's earlier remarks that Russian security interests were an important element in the development of Russian negotiating positions, replied that the U.S. also had to take into account its national security requirements in developing positions for the START follow-on treaty. He noted that efforts were just getting underway in the Department of Defense to conduct the Congressionally-mandated Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that would analyze U.S. nuclear force requirements for the coming years. Warner stated that in recognition of the importance of the START follow-on efforts, the Department of Defense was accelerating the NPR-related analyses needed to support the negotiations, and was committed to having U.S. numbers available for discussion during June for the negotiations leading up to the July Summit.

112. (S) Antonov stated that another element of the START follow-on agreement that was an important issue for Russia was the inclusion of conventionally-armed strategic ballistic missiles. He stated that he understood that the United

States was planning to deploy only a small number of such conventionally-armed missiles and, if the number was to be small, wondered why the United States could not simply agree to include these weapons in the warheads limited by the new treaty. Antonov continued that yet another serious element of the Russian position was that the new treaty should contain the START provision that prohibits basing of START-limited systems outside the national territory of each state. He said that Russia could support the extension of the START provisions on verification of bombers that were temporarily stationed outside of national territory.

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine

¶13. (S) Antonov stated that he was concerned by the statements made by Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan in December 2008 at the START Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission session, that they wanted to be included in the START follow-on negotiations and the treaty that emerged. He was particularly concerned by the Ukrainian statement that Ukraine believed the security assurances provided to Ukraine from the United States and Russia were directly connected to Ukraine's participation in START. Once START expires, Ukraine asserted, these security assurances would also expire and Ukraine might be forced to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Ultimately, Antonov suggested, this issue was not a substantive issue for Ukraine, but was driven by its belief that participation in strategic arms control gave it a higher status in the eyes of the rest of the world.

In his view, the United States and Russia needed to work together to convince the three other parties to START that the assurances given to them will not expire with the START Treaty, and to confirm to the three that we are firm in our intent that the START follow-on negotiations and agreement be bilateral in nature. A/S Gottemoeller, mentioning a commemoration of the 1993-94 Trilateral Statement negotiations that she had participated in in December 2008 in Moscow, said that further ideas for security cooperation may help to assuage concerns and invest the three countries further in the nonproliferation regime. She undertook to provide some ideas for further discussion.

Compliance Report

¶14. (S) During the discussions, Antonov stated that he thought the U.S. scheduled issuance in the near term future

of the report to Congress on national compliance with various arms control agreements that was harshly critical of Russia would "spoil the atmosphere" of greater cooperation that both countries were working to develop. He said that if such a report were to be issued, Russia would be forced to issue a strong denial of any claims it contained that Russia was not meeting its treaty obligations. A/S Gottemoeller noted that this report is a legal requirement and could not be ignored.

¶15. (S) At the end of the meeting Antonov stated that an Aide-Memoire on missile defense which Russia had provided to the United States during the London meetings in March seems to have been lost in Washington, given the fact that Russia had not received a response to this Aide-Memoire. He passed another copy of the document to A/S Gottemoeller, and asked that she take it back to Washington and provide it to the appropriate people. (Begin Comment: The Russian Aide-Memoire will be hand-carried back to Washington. End Comment.)

Delegation Lists

¶16. (U) Russia:

U.S.

Assistant Secretary Rose Gottemoeller, State/VCI
George Look, Senior Director, NSC
Edward Warner, OSD
Matthias Mitman, U.S. Embassy, Rome

Russian Federation

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, MFA
Lieutenant General Evgeniy Buzhinskiy, MOD
Sergey Koshelev, MFA
Vladimir Proshin, Russian Embassy, Rome
Colonel Sergey Kolevatov, Russian Embassy, Rome

¶17. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Gottemoeller.
DIBBLE